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SIPDIS, SENSITIVE

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SUBJECT: APPROACHING THE EU REGARDING GEORGIA IN ADVANCE
OF THE SEPTEMBER 5-6 FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING (GYMNICH)

11. (U) This is an action request. See paragraph 4.

12. (SBU) Summary: EU Foreign Ministers will hold an informal "Gymnich" meeting in Avignon on September 5-6. We expect the agenda to include: Georgia and EU/Russia relations, the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, updating the 2003 EU Security Strategy, Transatlantic Relations, and, time permitting, Serbia and Afghanistan/Pakistan. This cable includes points concerning Georgia. A supplementary message will address the other topics. The EU is also preparing for the September 1 extraordinary European Council meeting on Georgia, in which EU leaders intend to discuss an EU role in a possible monitoring and/or peacekeeping operation, an assistance package to Georgia, and relations with Russia. Posts in EU member states are requested to approach host governments as soon as possible and at an appropriately senior level to convey U.S. views. Posts are requested to include the SIPDIS caption on their response cables. Points are to be delivered to EU member states only, as well as to the EU Council Secretariat and Commission. Other posts should not/not deliver these points.

BACKGROUND

13. (SBU) EU Political and Security Committee (PSC) Ambassadors met August 26 to discuss Georgia and will meet again August 29. There appears to be a consensus building around deploying an EU civilian ESDP operation to complement the OSCE monitoring mission. Other options, including a more militarized mission, were also discussed. The PSC is also considering how to assess the viability of such a mission, and was animated by the view that whatever was done needed to be done quickly and with high visibility. We need to capitalize on this interest and strongly encourage the EU to deploy personnel to Georgia as soon as possible.

14. (SBU) ACTION REQUEST: Please deliver the following points to the appropriate MFA and/or other host government official(s) as soon as possible.

-- We appreciate the strong EU statements concerning the situation in Georgia.

-- Russia's actions in Georgia contravene numerous international commitments that it has made over the years, including UNSCR 1808 which was adopted with Russian support in April 2008; these actions are completely unacceptable.

-- We understand that the EU is considering sending an ESDP mission, likely civilian, to Georgia.

-- Such a mission could make a crucial contribution providing the international mechanism to end Russia's right to "additional security measures" outside South

Ossetia under the Cease Fire agreement, to increasing military transparency and stability, and to deterring human rights violations in areas occupied by Russian forces.

-- We agree with the view that sending additional monitors to Georgia quickly to complement the OSCE is an immediate priority. We would welcome an EU decision as early as possible to deploy an ESDP civilian mission.

-- The United States anticipates announcing a significant reconstruction package for Georgia very soon. We believe doing so in conjunction with the EU would send a powerful message of international solidarity to the world. The European Council meeting on September 1 is an excellent opportunity for the EU to make such an announcement, recognizing many details would remain to be worked out.

-- Russia's actions in Georgia have also sent a sharp message of assertiveness to our partners and friends in the region. We want to work with the EU to reassure these states of our commitment to their security, independence, sovereignty, prosperity and democratic values; that we will resist Russian attempts to restrict or undermine them; and that we will counter efforts to stifle energy competition. We encourage EU efforts to bolster these states' freedom of maneuver and strengthen their ties to European and global markets.

-- At the same time, we welcome the EU conducting a serious review of its relationship with Russia as a means to make clear to Russia that its actions carry a cost. We are conducting a parallel effort, and believe that coordination between us on possible approaches would help send a message of unity and determination.

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